



Serpent Newsletter

P.O. Box 954 Mundelein, Illinois 60060 USA

Newsletter for Serpent Enthusiasts

September 27, 2012

A Note from the Editor

I'm happy to issue yet another issue of the Serpent Newsletter. This time it is notable for having more pictures than usual; there were so many good ones that it was difficult to decide which ones to cut. It is also unusual that I had no new materials to review, although a few previously unnoticed CDs are brought to light and will be reviewed in the next issue. We also have coverage of two interesting workshops, and keep in mind that the next Serpentarium is only half a year and change away.

Based on the feedback I have been receiving since the April 2011 edition of this newsletter, it seems that most readers that received the electronic version are happy with it. This makes it seem inevitable that the remainder of the distribution will go the same way, with only WHEN remaining a question. My feeling is that probably another year will pass before this happens. I am interested in hearing from readers who are opposed to this. Those who have paid a subscription recently, and who feel that this applied only to a print edition, are folks that I particularly want to hear from regarding this one way or the other. I am not asking for donations at this time, but of course there remain operating expenses apart from printing and mailing, so donations remain welcome.

Paul Schmidt

New Materials

While no new materials arrived for review since the last newsletter, several CDs old and new have come to light that include at least some serpent playing. All CDs include Michel Godard on serpent and sometimes on tuba as well, and he has graciously offered to round up copies for review in the next issue of this newsletter. The album names and performers are listed below for those who wish to obtain them in advance of the reviews.

Gavino Murgia-Magalitico features Murgia on soprano saxophone, flaute, bassu and tumbororo, Luciano Biondini on fisarmonica, Franck Tortiller on vibraphone, and Pietro Iodice on percussion. *Le sonnet oublie* has Roberto Martinelli on soprano and alto saxophones, and Francesco D'Auria on percussion. *Ivresses* features Franck Tortiller on vibraphone and marimba, and Patrice Héral on percussions, voice, and synthesizer.

Impertinance is percussion focused, with Patrice Héral on drums and Franck Tortiller on vibraphone and marimba. *Cousins Germains* has Christof Lauer on soprano and tenor saxophone, Wolfgang Puschnig on alto saxophone and flute, Herbert Joos on trumpet and flugelhorn, Franck Tortiller on vibraphone and marimba, and Wolfgang Reisinger on drums. *Patrick Bebelaar-Point of View* features Patrick Bebelaar on piano, Frank Kroll on saxophones, Pandit Prakash Maharaj on table, Pandit Vikash Maharaj on sarrod, and Subhash Maharaj on tamboura.

Patrick Bebelaar-You Never Lose An Island once again features Bebelaar's piano, with Herbert Joos on trumpet and flugelhorn, and Frank Kroll on soprano saxophone and bass clarinet. *Une Promenade Musicale Pays d'Auge* has Linda Bsiri's voice and tromba marina, with Walter Quintus and Christine Groult furnishing 'electroacoustic music'.

Workshops

- Edinburgh Serpentarium 2013

All known and suspected serpentists (and players of the English Bass Horn, Ophimonocleide, Chromatic Bass Horn, and Ophicleide) are invited to participate in a gathering in and near Edinburgh in May 2013. This Serpentarium will include playing sessions, an opportunity to examine the 24 serpent family instruments (including the original 'Anaconda') and 10 ophicleides in the Reid Concert Hall Museum of Instruments (Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments). Not to mention the eating and drinking in good company. The playing sessions will take

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place in Carlops, a few miles outside Edinburgh, where Murray and Patsy Campbell have their home. Accommodation is available at reasonable prices in the area. Accommodation is also available in Edinburgh. The dates will be 24-27 May 2013, and a website has been established with the latest information, www.homepages.ed.ac.uk/am

The provisional schedule of events is:

Friday 24th May

Afternoon: arrive in Carlops; transport can be provided from Edinburgh Waverley station by arrangement (buses from the airport go directly to Waverley)

Evening: small group playing sessions, supper

Saturday 25th May

All day: group practice led by Phil Humphries

Evening: dinner at Allan Ramsay pub

Sunday 26th May

Morning: small group playing sessions, lunch

Afternoon: visit to the Reid Concert Hall Museum of Instruments

Evening: possible attendance at a concert in Edinburgh

Monday 27th May

Morning: possibility of individual lessons

Afternoon: group practice led by Phil Humphries

Evening: informal concert in Carlops

Tuesday 28th May

Morning: depart, transport can be provided to Edinburgh Waverley station by arrangement

For further information about the schedule and events, email Arnold Myers at A.Myers@ed.ac.uk

For details of accommodation, write to Murray Campbell at D.M.Campbell@ed.ac.uk



Serpent figurine from the Sue Bradley collection

• Historic Brass Society 2012 Symposium

In place of the usual Early Brass Festival, the Historic Brass Society presented an international early brass symposium in New York City from July 12 through 15. The event was held in three different venues of Manhattan; The New School, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Church of St. Luke in the Fields.

Serpentists in attendance included Patricia Gauci from Canada, Paul Schmidt and John Weber from Chicago, Craig Kridel from South Carolina, Doug Yeo from Arizona, Volny Hostiou from France, and Murray & Patsy Campbell and Arnold Myers from Scotland. However, serpents were hardly the focus of the event, and the usual natural trumpets, natural horns, cornetts and sackbuts predominated.



Ophicleide figurine from the Sue Bradley collection

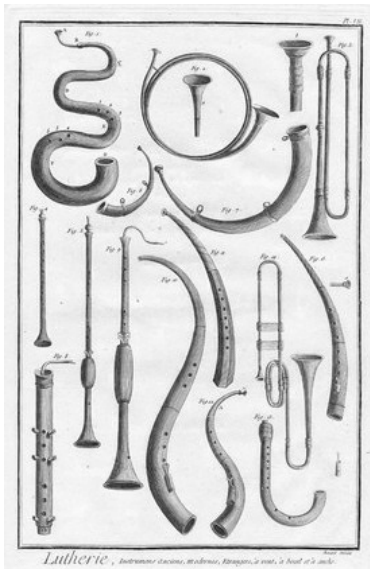
Regretably, the symposium was organized so that the lectures were in opposing camps, so that participants were required to pick favorites, and nobody could attend everything. Since this review is based on the experiences of one participant, only those lectures and programs attended in person will be mentioned.

Thursday the 12th began with *Brassiness Potential: Trombones Grow Nonlinear as Volume/Sound Pressure Level Increases*, presented by Arnold Myers and Murray Campbell. Next up was *Design and Manufacture of 18th Century Horns* by Lisa Norman and John Chick. John Miller presented his paper *Trumpet versus Cornet*, and Don Smithers talked about *Trajan's Trumpets*.

Later that morning, Michael Collver gave a presentation on unaccompanied cornetto, including Biber's *Passacaglia* adapted from solo violin, Bassano's *Ricercata Seconda*, and Bismantova's *Preludio per Cornetto*. Next up was the group ¡Sacabuche! Italian 17th Century Motets with Trombone, performing Casati's *Laetare Syon*, Cauda's *Domine Jesu Christe*, three *motets* by Fillago, and Cauda's *Beatus vir*.

That afternoon the concerts began with *Grand Octuor pour six cors et deux trombones* by Joseph Martin Mengal, and *Sextour pour six cors en different tons, Op. 10* by Louis-François Dauprat. The day ended with lectures by Linda Pearse titled *Seventeenth Century Italian Concerted Motets with Specified Trombone Parts*, and Joe Drew titled *The Great Operatic Role for the Trumpet: Karlheinz Stockhausen's "Michael from Light"*.

Friday morning began with Herbert Heyde's *Presentation of Serpents and Low Brass Instruments of the Metropolitan Museum Collection*, followed by a concert held in the André Mertens Galleries for Musical Instruments. First on the program was Jeff Snedeker on natural horn, accompanied by Kathryn Cok on fortepiano, performing *Grande Sonate pour le pianoforte et cor, Op. 29* by Friedrich Eugen Thurner and *Quatrième Divertissement pour cor et piano* by Frédéric Duvernoy. Next was Jaroslav Roucek on keyed trumpet with Maketa Knittlova on violin and Donsok Shin on fortepiano performing Johann Nepomuk Hummel's *Trio for Trumpet, Violin and Piano*, which if backed up by orchestra would be the famous *Trumpet Concerto*. There followed two more lectures, *African Horns and Horn Ensembles* given by Ignace DeKeyser, and Joe Kaminski's *Asante Ivory Trumpets in Pre-Colonial Military Religious Rites of Ghana*.



Musical instrument print from 1751

After lunch, members of the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis Trumpet Ensemble presented a concert in the museum organ loft, *Spanish and Portugese Music in Imitation of Natural Trumpets and Horns*. The afternoon concluded with five lectures and a concert-presentation. First was Raymond David Burkhart giving his paper *American Women's Brass Quartets Before 1900: 'Clever, Versatile, and Fair to Look Upon'*. Next was *Arizona in Full Blast* by Don Larry, and Trevor Herbert's *British Military Culture in the Long Nineteenth Century*. The next two lectures were on the subject of serpents; Benny Sluchin's *Serpent Method Books in France, First Half of Nineteenth Century* and Thierry



'Chanteurs des Cours' postcard

Maniguet's *The Evolution of the Serpent in the First Half of the 19th Century – Looking for the Basson Russe!*. For serpentists, the highlight of the afternoon was the closing concert-presentation given by Doug Yeo and Volny Hostiou. With brief spoken descriptions by Volny in between, the selections were *Ave Maria Stella* (plainsong), *Oculus* by Orlando di Lasso, *Sonata "La Monica"* by Phillippe Friedrich Bøddecker, *Domine Salvum Fac Regem* (La Feillé from *Méthode de plain chant*, Paris, 1745), *Allegro XI* by Jean-Baptiste Métoyen, *Andante* by François Gossec, and *Duo 3* by Schiltz from his serpent method. It was a treat to finally meet Volny after hearing his recordings for the last several years.

The day concluded with a concert at The Church of St. Luke in the Fields. First on the program was a set of natural trumpet fanfares led by Friedemann Immer and members of his "All Star" Natural Trumpet Fanfare, comprised of Immer himself, Barry Baugess, Robert Civiletti, John Foster, Juhani Listo, Jean-François Madeuf, Jaroslav Roucek, and Crispian Steele-Perkins. Next was a trio with continuo comprised of Bruce Dickey on cornetto, Adam Woolf on trombone, Wouter Verschuren on dulcian and Kathryn Cok on harpsichord and organ, performing fourteen selections. The concert concluded with three large scale multi-choral works for cornetts and sackbuts, organized by Bruce Dickey and directed by Gunther Schuller. The players, forming up to four different choirs located on either side of the balcony, at the altar and to the side of the sanctuary, was assembled mostly 'by invitation' from the pool of professional players and some amateur ones available at the symposium. The selections were *Canzon 18 a 14* by Giovanni Gabrieli, *Canzon prima a 12* by Giovanni Priuli, and *Surrexit Christus a 16* by Gabrieli. Each choir had its own keyboard continuo, realized on two portable organs, the main organ in the loft, and a

harpichord. The charts were sight-read with only a few stops to pick up the pieces here and there, and the music was indeed glorious. The evening concluded in the church's social hall with the traditional pizza and beer party.



On Saturday morning, Jamie Savan started things off with his lecture *Straight Talking on the Origins of the Cornett*, in which he described and demonstrated the transitional instrument that bridged the earlier animal horn and the later cornett. Depicted in iconography, this instrument seems at first to have too few finger holes while the players are invariably shown with one hand over the 'bell' opening, and Jamie demonstrated how the capabilities of those holes can be extended through the device of hand stopping. Fritz Heller then continued on the general subject with his talk on *The Straight Cornetto*. Keith Polk then gave another of his always engaging lectures, this time on *The Inception of the Trombone Ensemble: A Revised Dating*, and then Stewart Carter spoke on *Blaset mit Posaunen – Brass Playing in the Early Reformed Churches of Kanton Bern*.

Next on the schedule was a concert that began with cornet and trombone duets performed by Allan Dean and Benny Slucin with piano accompaniment by Steven Plank. The concert then featured the group Les Sacqueboutuers – Ensemble de Cuivres Anciens de Toulouse, performing their program titled *Ludi Musici (Musical Games)*. Later in the day was a *Conversation With Gunther Schuller*, with Trevor Herbert as the interviewer. There followed a curiously misnamed roundtable discussion hosted by Trevor Herbert, listed in the program as an examination of the future of the Historic Brass Society. Disappointingly for those in attendance who had expected a discussion on the future direction and focus of the HBS, the dialogue was in reality a group of college professors discussing their careers and whether it made sense to encourage students to pursue an education in the early brass field. The day's events concluded with a concert by His Majestys Sagbutts and Cornett, interestingly performing a single contemporary piece as opposed a more traditional program.

Sunday morning began with *The Chemical Composition of 16th Century Nuremburg Brass Musical Instruments*, presented by Hannes Vereecke. Next, Sabine Klaus and Arnold Myers gave a joint presentation *The Disk Valve and Its Place in History*, with their guest presenter Crispian Steele-Perkins playing some examples on a cornet equipped with this type of valve. Adrian von Steiger then presented his paper *Looking Through the Windows of [a] French Brasswind Instrument Workshop*.

The symposium concluded with a concert. First on the program was Crispian Steele-Perkins on slide trumpet with accompaniment by Steven Plank. Next was a brilliant performance by the group of natural horn students from northern California, Trumpet Consort von Humbolt, last seen at an HBS event years ago when the Early Brass Festival took place in Berkeley, California. Following was a mass reading session for the natural trumpets, followed by a similar session for natural horns. Then Bahb Civiletti performed on natural trumpet, with recorded accompaniment by Music Minus One, playing a concerto by George von Reutter II. John Foster on natural trumpet with Steven Plank on organ were then heard, and the concert concluded with Ralph Dudgeon on keyed bugle, again with accompaniment by Steven Plank, performing C. Eugène Roy's *Thème and Variations sur un air d'Etienne Nicholas Mèhul*, the extensively titled *Ombra che a mi ritorna – Cavatina tirée 'Gabiella di Vergi'* by Michel Enrico Carafu di Colobrano, and a *Caprice*. At the conclusion of the concert, the Christopher Monk Award was presented to last year's winner, instrument maker Rainer Egger, and the 2012 winner, Kenneth Kreitner. Organizer Jeff Nussbaum then received a long round of applause.



Volny Hostiou wrote the following impressions of the symposium.

The HBS Symposium took place this year, 2012, in New York City, and the Big Apple met the serpent! In the midst of various subjects about brass organology, repertoires and practice, the serpent session took place in the Metropolitan Museum. Introduced by Craig Kridel, it began with a

presentation by professor Herbert Heyde who showed us some interesting pieces from the MET collection. What held my attention was a little serpent with a very little bore, maybe not a serpent played with a mouthpiece but probably with a double reed; was it the instrument used by Mozart as Renato Meucci proposed in his paper *Les 'serpentine' utilisés par Mozart à Milan, Renato Meucci, 2004, Musique Images Instruments, Volume 6*? It looked probably too poorly realized to be a real played instrument, so perhaps it was a prototype for a new kind of instrument?

In the museum store room I saw a French serpent, this anonymous instrument seemed to have the same characteristics as the serpent copied by Stephan Berger (E.02204) from the Paris Music Museum. Several instruments in Basel museums and Michel Godard's collection are similar, so maybe they are from the same maker?

Benny Sluchin (trombone player in IRCAM) made a very complete study about French serpent methods and gave a detailed catalog of the different exercises, pieces, and duets used by the authors in the project to write pedagogical books for serpent students in the 19th century. Thierry Maniguet (curator in Paris Music Museum) presented a paper about serpent classification and organological evolution in the 19th century, he pointed out specially the place of the bass horn and basson russe in the history of the serpent.

The serpent session concluded with a concert in duet by Douglas Yeo and myself. We performed a program with duets from the European Renaissance music to 19th century with some examples from serpent methods.



Doug Yeo and Volny Hostiou at the HBS Symposium

- Report on Workshop in the Jura Mountains
by Marton Radkai

Serpent Rising

Who knows where and when the serpent will surface at any given time? At the end of March, it was in the pristine air of

the Jura Mountains in Switzerland. The occasion was a special workshop attended by 24 musicians of all ages and walks of life, mostly professionals – teachers, performers, a priest, an organist, conservatory director, military bandsman, etc. – who converged from various parts of Switzerland and from Germany and France, to a large, solitary seminar house not far from the town of Saignelegiers. There they spent four days filling the air with that special warm and breathy sound of the grand old instrument, while exploring technical and musical fine points under the guidance of three of the instrument's great performers and teachers: Michel Godard and his two former students, Volny Hostiou and Patrick Wibart.



Caricature from 'Army and Navy' by Major T S Seccombe. Published by Frederick Warne & Co. Dates c 1873.

*"B is a Bandsman; how sweet to recline
On the turf, close beside the gay Bandsman, when fine,
And drink in the silvery strains as they pass
Through the soft summer air from his six feet of brass.*

*But pleasure has pain, and sometimes, you must know,
Though in harmony gentle, sweet music may flow,
Some instruments take great exertion to blow."*

The workshop was organized by local craftsman Stephan Berger and his wife Erna Suter with the help of the local communication specialist Claude Donzé. It took a year of hard work getting sponsors and coordinating with the teachers, but in the end all the elements came together perfectly. "I was surprised by the fact that there were so many young musicians as well," says Berger, looking back at the four-day serpent fest. "I also found it fascinating to observe the ease with which these teachers taught these large groups." Berger, who runs the Atelier de Cuir, a leather-working operation, and is something of an inventor on the side – one of his latest creations is a very successful harness for guide dogs for the blind – was one of the students. He has his own special history with the serpent, and may have written himself indelibly into the history of the instrument.

Six years ago, Godard approached him with a request: to restore and rebuild his instrument. In the process, Berger started learning the instrument as well, no mean feat for someone who had no previous experience playing any instrument. Not only did he complete the project for Godard, but he went even farther and began building instruments himself out of carbon composite. For Godard, who has devoted over two decades to the instrument, the availability of a high-quality and affordable instrument is crucial for the resurgence of the serpent.



L-R: Patrick Wibart, Michel Godard, Stephen Berger, Volny Hostiou at the Jura Mountains workshop

The workshop, titled *The Serpent's Journey*, was divided into areas of specialty. Wibart explored some of the basic technical aspects of the instrument, such as how to adjust pitch, close the holes properly, or even produce certain notes. He also took his classes through the intricacies of playing contemporary music, which requires a host of special techniques. Volny Hostiou, for his part, shared a particular specialty especially for performers interested in some of the rarer aspects of ancient music: the skill of improvisation in the baroque age. As for Michel Godard, one of his areas of focus was the art of jazz improvisation. It was an exciting and intense moment for all concerned. Swiss press and television made its way up to the lonely ridge known as the *Free Mountains* to broadcast news of the event beyond the region. What they found was a group of enthusiasts all passionate about this almost esoteric instrument, eager to learn more about it but equally eager to meet kindred spirits and share personal experiences – networking, to use a modern word. This, at any rate, was one of the often heard comments made by the participants during a stock-taking hour on the final day.

Community Spirit

Many who had become smitten with the instrument felt they could only reach a certain level alone or given the means at their disposal. "I had tried earlier on to get tips from tuba players and trombonists," said Meike Herzig, a professional recorder player from Cologne. She had even contacted a zink (cornetto) player who was unable to even get a sound out of the instrument. "That's why this meeting was so important for me," she says. "It was encouraging to see that others who are working with the serpent have the same problems, with the sonority of some of the more difficult notes, for example, and then to hear how the pros solve the very same problems..." She took her lessons learned back home and has started accompanying voice students at the Düsseldorf conservatory, thus using the instrument in its original function. Hostiou, from the perspective of the teacher, experienced this enthusiasm as a powerful commitment and their openness to the different repertoires touched upon. "Once again, I noticed the strong sense of pluralism in the world of serpentists", he said. "Each is willing to bring a new brick rather than copy what everyone else is doing. It's one of the particularities of this instrument that has no real 'school' and allows all types of expression."

For Michel Godard, the sheer number of players who had shown up was amazing. "Twenty years ago, you could barely hear a serpent," he pointed out in an interview. "There were a few devotees in England, but you couldn't find anyone in France or Germany."



Group playing session at Jura Mountains workshop

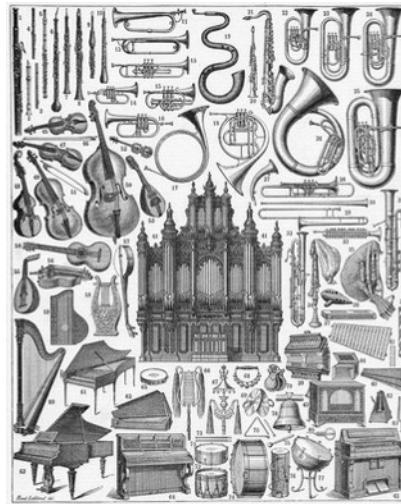
In the Open

For all participants, the climax of the workshop was undoubtedly the concert at the Café du Soleil in Saignelegiers, a hub of cultural life whose reputation extends well beyond the region's borders. Before a packed hall, the 24 'students' opened up on all mouthpieces with a seven-part canon on the cantus firmus *Ave Maris Stella*, written by Gioanpietro Del Buono, an Italian composer of the mid-17th century, and directed by Volny Hostiou. The concert then proceeded with solos and duets by Hostiou and Wibart occasionally accompanied by violinist Fanny

Paccoud and the young theorbist Bruno Helstroffer. Hostiou joined Wibart in *Domine, salvum fac regem* by de la Feillé and a *Ciaccona* by Falconieri, and went solo with the *Sonata sopra la Monica* by the 17th-century German organist and composer Friedrich Philipp Böddecker. Wibart then demonstrated new colorings and delicate percussive effects with several contemporary works, notably an excerpt from *Chers Trembles* by the French composer Gerard Pesson.

After a brief intermission, Godard came on stage together with the stunning Sardinian saxophone player and vocalist Gavino Murgia, whose sepulchrally deep voice opened the second part like some herald from another world. It was a feast mixing old music with new. Each musician had the space and time to express him- or herself, to accompany, or shine as a soloist, while Godard calmly held the stage together with his smooth, majestic serpent sound. He played a number of pieces from his latest album, which features the music of Monteverdi in part dissembled and then reassembled, ornamented not with fancy mordants and trills, but rather daring rhythms, experimental and jazzy harmonies, spontaneous musical meditations. Among the pieces, the famous duet *Pur ti miro* from *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, and the madrigal *Zefiro torna*. These alternated with a number of his own works, exotic *Ambre*, the moving *A Trace of Grace*, and the *Prelude in F*.

For the grand finale, the 24 serpents returned to the stage for a rousing *Reggae des serpents* by Godard, the swinging *Come On DH* by Eddy Louis, during which two of the students had a chance to test their improvisational skills, and, finally *Lyoba*, hymn for cows from the neighboring canton of Fribourg (famous for Gruyère cheese and extra-thick cream). The tongue-in-cheek arrangement was written by local trumpet wizard, Tennessee-born Bill Holden. It was a fitting and humorous conclusion to a concert devoted to the instrument about which composer-comedian Peter Schickele once wrote through his avatar P.D.Q. Bach, "It looks like a snake and sounds like a cow." The excitement of the group was palpable till the last minute, and promises to carry over to the next workshop, which has not been scheduled as of yet. Suffice to say, the location is excellent, at the crossroads of Germanic and Latin Europe, and it is propitious to hard and productive work. The air is clear, the landscapes broad and inspiring. And the gifts of the table, donated by local bakers, butchers, cheese makers and brewers and prepared by the amazing Gert Hollwurtel, ensure that body and soul are kept together during the long hours of practice.



Musical instrument print from 1897

Getting Serpents

Here is the list of Serpent makers who have made themselves known to us. Many instruments are available through dealers, and all makers will deal directly with individual customers.

Christopher Monk Instruments
(c/o Nicholas Perry)
224 North Street
Luton
LU2 7QN
England

Derek Farnell
82 Crumpsall Lane
Manchester M8 5SG
England

Phone: +44 (0)1617 407778
(*ophicleides*)

Phone: +44 (0)1582 457 992
<nicholas@perry2185.freereserve.co.uk>
(*serpents, early cimballo, bass horns*)

Wetter/Berger Serpents
Stephen Berger
CH-2336 Les Bois
Phone: 0041 (0) 3296 11188
Matthias Wetter
CH-8475 Ossingen
Phone: 0041 (0) 5231 73184
Switzerland

David Harding (by EMS Bradford-order here)
The Early Music Shop
38 Manningham Lane
Bradford
West Yorkshire BD1 3EA
England
Phone: (44) 01274 393753
<www.e-m-s.com>
<sales@earlyms.demon.co.uk>

<info@serpentmakers.ch>
<www.wetterberger.ch>
<www.serpentmakers.ch>

(*resin serpents*)

(*alphorns and serpents, both wood and carbon fiber*)

Serpents Ribo
(c/o Pierre Ribo)
Rue Van Oost, 40
1030 Bruxelles
Belgium
Phone: 0032 497 574 496
England

Christopher Monk Instruments
(c/o Jeremy West)
+44 (0)1388 526999
<www.jeremywest.co.uk/cmi/>
<hmcornett@gmail.com>

(*cornetti*)

<pierre.ribo@>souslesplatanes.be>

Sam Goble Historical Mouthpieces
phone: +44 (0) 77 8056 4370
<www.samgoble.com>
<info@samgoble.com>
(*cornett and serpent mouthpieces*)

(*serpents*)

Kaiser Serpents
http://www.kaiserserpents.com

(*fiberglass serpents after Baudouin*)

Build an experimental serpent from plans via
<www.serpentwebsite.com>

Serpentones Lopez
Juan Lopez Romera, maker
http://serpenton.com/

(*wooden serpents & cornetti*)

NEW!

Where Serpents Gather

- Canadian ophicleidian Gary Nagels related his adventures in adding serpent to his stable of instruments, using an instrument by Kaiser. Travails included starting with an ophicleide mouthpiece only to find it poorly suited, then explorations into available serpent mouthpieces, as well as finding an appropriate bocal for the historical tunings of the group(s) he is playing with. He also plans to travel to Europe in search of more instruments and to hopefully meet with some of the established fine players there.

Gary has been in touch with Craig Kridel and received some good advice about tuning the serpent to the historic pitch standards used by the plainchant group he has been working with. Gary writes, "I will have Kaiser make me a special bocal and see how that works. New mouthpieces are coming from JC Sherman and I am thinking about getting in touch with Nicholas Perry about a Monk serpent."

Gary wrote about his first serpent performances, "The concert we played was part of a seminar in Montreal held on the weekend of August 17-19, 2012. It was for the Gregorian Institute of Canada. Here's the link on the event; www.gregorian.ca/eng/news.php. The talk went well and the concert was well attended. I didn't realize there was that much interest in Gregorian chant. It was held in the very large church in downtown Montreal, the Gesù-Centre de Créativité with a very lively acoustic."

"The talk had a working title *Histoire et évolution du serpent à l'ophicleide, musique sacré, populaire et orchestrale du 16e au 19e siècle*, or in English *The History and Evolution of the Serpent and Ophicleide in Sacred, Popular and Orchestral Music from the 16th-19 Century*. A long title but it sort of encompassed everything. The audience were plainchant enthusiasts mostly from Canada. There were some Europeans and I think a few from the States. The talk was given in French; I can write an English version of the talk but it's all information that everyone

knows anyway, although it did include a few tidbits about serpents in New France. In the concert portion of the talk my brother Lance, a tuba player, was there to help. We played some duets on serpent & tuba and ophicleide & tuba to show the evolution of the sound change through the centuries. It was a great success for a first try and I am out looking for other opportunities to play. I've been out of the early music scene for too long and it feels good to be back."

- Leonard Byrne wrote about playing an ophicleide solo, *A Song for Japan* by Steven Verhelst, in front of the local British brass band this last spring. A video has been posted on YouTube at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oNIVe8y5_4



- The Stölzel Chamber Ensemble performed two concerts on June 29 and July 1, 2012, in Bonn, Germany, of unpublished cantatas by Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel (a contemporary of J.S. Bach). The program included *Bist Du bei mir*, *Aria in C minor* (later adapted by Bach), *German Mass in E minor*, *Cantata in Bb major 'Wohltun ist wie ein gesegneter Garten' for the Fourth Sunday After Trinity*, the *Oboe Concerto in D major*, and *Cantata in Bb major 'Weil wir in der Hütten sind'*. The ensemble consisted of SATB vocalists, organ, baroque violins, violas, and cello, baroque oboes, and our own Erhard Schwartz, better known for his ophicleide expertise, on serpent.

According to the program notes, the use of serpent on the bass line is Stölzel's original intention, not a contemporary substitution. The score markings for the basso part are "Basso Serpentine", and the program notes go on at some length, citing sources, as justification in concluding that this score marking is equivalent to specifying the serpent as the preferred instrument for the bass part.

- Sue Bradley wrote, "I've had the ophicleide equivalent of a blue moon: two ophicleide gigs within a week, with

The Gregorian Institute of Canada and Le Gesù present
a Concert of Plainchant from New France

Les Méandres du Plain-Chant

with
Schola Saint Grégoire
de Montréal
lead by
Jean-Pierre Noisoux
featuring
Gary Nagels
playing Serpent
and Ophicleide

Friday August 17, 2012
8:00pm
Gesù Church
1202 de Bleury, Montreal

\$30/\$20 students and seniors
Tickets on sale at the Gesù
(1200 de Bleury, Montreal • 514-861-4096)
or on-line at admission.com

admission
1200 de Bleury, Montreal
514-861-4096
admission.com

gesù
Le Gesù
The Gregorian Institute of Canada
Le Gesù
The Gregorian Institute of Canada

Drawing: Jaku Oshiro

separate orchestras. The first gig was playing *Harold in Italy*, an early-ish Berlioz piece, a viola solo. Quite delicious viola music, very soulful and expressive, not the usual concerto style of solo piece at all, although I have seen it described as the world's longest viola joke. The second gig was playing the *Hungarian March*, including playing the triangle note marked in the Kalmus edition for the tuba player (*im vierzehnten Takt schlaegt der Tubaist Triangel*). The tuba player plays triangle only, on the second half of the fourteenth bar of the piece. Quite fun! 'Takt' can be both beat and bar. This is the first time in nearly thirty years of playing that piece that a conductor has allowed me to play the triangle note! The second orchestra seemed rather pleased to have an ophicleide, and the conductor surprisingly turned to the audience, gave quite a learned introduction to the instrument, then invited me to speak about it and demonstrate it. Most satisfying!"

- Gabe Stone on serpent and David Gardner on fiddle performed for comedienne Joan Rivers at Kings Arms Tavern in Colonial Williamsburg this summer. Rivers was accompanied by her family and friends in an annual trip to the Colonial Capitol of Virginia. After playing a number of popular 18th century tunes, we opened the floor for questions. She was delighted to see the serpent, and took a number of pictures with us. After the performance, Rivers gave the musician a token of thanks in the form of silk scarves from her fashion line for their wives. Looks like another fan of the serpent! Her mobile phone camera was used to take the photo included here.



L-R: Gabe Stone, David Gardner, Joan Rivers

- On July 28, Doug Yeo played ophicleide (9 keys, by Roehn, Paris, c. 1855) with the Boston Symphony Orchestra in a performance of Berlioz's *Damnation of Faust*, conducted by Charles Dutoit; Mike Roylance played tuba.

For years, the BSO had used the Breitkopf and Härtel edition of *Faust*, which did away with the ophicleide part and split it up between the first and third trombones. For this

performance - and performances by the BSO in 2007 conducted by James Levine - Doug and Mike Roylance returned to Berlioz's stated intention in using an ophicleide and tuba in the orchestra. This scoring can be found in the 1854 edition of the score published by Costallat & Cie., Paris (now reprinted in the Dover edition, ISBN 0-486-4-169-3. Working from Cliff Bevan's orchestral excerpt book *Hector Berlioz: Complete Ophicleide Parts Volume 2* (Piccolo Press, PP0028), Berlioz's original parts were reconstructed. The accompanying photo shows Mike Roylance and Doug Yeo in rehearsal for the July performance.



Doug Yeo next to Mike Roylance's tuba in rehearsal for Berlioz's *The Damnation of Faust* with the BSO

A week later, on August 5, Doug played his last concert as a member of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Following a performance of Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* (on which he played trombone), Doug took his final bow from the podium at Tanglewood, and then retired from the BSO after 27 years of service to the orchestra. Doug and his wife, Pat, then moved to Arizona where he has taken up his new position as Professor of Trombone at Arizona State University. Already, Doug has demonstrated ophicleide and serpent for the trombone and tuba/euphonium pedagogy classes, and serpent for the bassoon literature class. On November 11, he will give a recital at ASU with organist, Dr. Kimberly Marshall, on which he will play works for trombone, sackbut, serpent and ophicleide. More information about Doug's new life at ASU can be found at <http://www.asutrombonestudio.org> and <http://www.facebook.com/asutrombonestudio>

- Keith Ryder has been continuing his serpent playing with Col. Webb's Band of Musick, a Colonial American era wind band. In existence for many years under the direction

of Lois Jones, the band is a *harmoniemusik* ensemble (2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 natural horns, bassoon and serpent when at full strength) and is popular in reenactments and period dances. Keith plays a serpent made by Russ Kaiser. A video of the band accompanying the Heritage Musick and Daunce Society with the tune *Barbarini's Tambourine* in an event in Lafayette, Indiana in September 2012 can be viewed on YouTube www.youtube.com/watch?v=-79E5KabtfY&feature=youtu.be



About the Organization

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More Exciting News

• Composer Jim Theobald's website is up and well at <http://www.jimtheobald.com>. His serpent and percussion composition is available there to download without charge.

Included in the downloadable list are his *The Serpent Dances* for solo serpent accompanied by drum.

• Doug Yeo wrote about a new concerto for serpent and string orchestra, *Diversità: NO LIMIT* by Luigi Morleo. Doug commented, "The composer sent me the music. Not easy, but a fine piece and I'll work to get a performance here in the USA. I had not known about this player", referring to the serpentist Giuseppe Scarati who performed the piece with Orchestra d'Archi del Conservatorio di Monopoli under the direction of Francesco Masi. Scarati's performance can be heard on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=SzNS0D1IRhw&feature=youtu.be

• In the April 2009 issue of this newsletter, the subject of serpent gig bags was covered. One bag was mentioned was that of BassBags in England, but there was no photo or endorsement from a serpentist as the other bags had. Mark Jones recently acquired a Baudouin church serpent and obtained a gig bag from BassBags. Mark wrote, "I contacted Monk Instruments, told them what I had, and Nicholas told me to contact BassBags tell them I needed a 'church serpent' bag - they have them on their website www.bassbags.co.uk and their email is sales@bassbags.co.uk

It is an excellent bag with a cordura cover and with carrying handles and a shoulder strap. You unzip the bag and you have a zipped felt bag inside - that is where the bocal and mouthpiece goes - like you might see for a bow for a string instrument. You lift that up, and you have a padded compartment for the serpent, in this case for a Baudouin 2 keyed serpent. The cordura has zippers, and inside looks to be plywood or something like that for protection for banging the instrument. Price is £134 and shipping was about £71, total £205 pounds or about \$331. Very fine bag."



Serpent case by BassBags

- Lloyd Farrar is in the process of donating all his wind instruments, including serpents and the original Monk military serpent, to the University of Illinois Sousa Collection, Scott Schwartz curator. Lloyd also donating a pipe organ to the Campbellsville University Vogt Farrar collection. This newsletter has been in contact with Mr. Schwartz who has confirmed taking possession of the serpents, and he hopes to be able to contribute more for the next newsletter.

- Gabe Stone wrote to tell about another serpent maker to add to the growing list, Juan Lopez Romera. The website is <http://serponton.com>, and it advises that Romera makes his serpents from either walnut or bubigna. The webpage includes sound samples that are apparently made using Romera's instruments, and the serpent sound is heard on a page accessed by following the Multimedia link followed by selecting the Música option (a Telemann excerpt) or the Video option (a small band in an organ loft). The website does not state that the serpent being played is one of Romero's, but that seems to be the point of the link. If any readers have more knowledge of this maker's serpents, or who plays them, please write to this newsletter.



Serpent by Lopez Romera

- The apparel and auto accessories company Speedy Pros, website www.myspeedypros.com, includes many T-shirts with slogans, many of which pertain to musical instruments. In the website, following the link to T-Shirts and then selecting the 'Got Music' option, one can find 55 pages of shirts with 'Got Heckelphone?', 'Got Pipe Organ?', and yes, 'Got Ophicleide?' on page 32. Each shirt design is available in twenty different colors and six sizes, and they are quickly made to order, i.e. they are not stocked. Your faithful editor bought two in gray and black, and was pleased to receive them within a couple of days, and happily the text is a kind of vinyl as opposed to simple silk screen inks, and the shirt itself is a quality name brand with a good heavy fabric. The price is \$13 per shirt. These shirts were also available from the same supplier via their eBay webstore by searching for the word 'ophicleide' or going directly to <http://cgi.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&item=140675487205&var=440039081882>. For those living outside the influence of American print advertisements and television commercials, the significance of the 'Got whatever?' campaign might seem nonsensical. But in the

States ever since 1993, 'Got Milk?' has been quite pervasive in the promotion of consumption of the dairy product, and usually features images of celebrities with obvious 'milk moustaches'. 'Got Milk?' is one of the most famous commodity brand and influential campaigns in the United States. Since then it has become whimsical to use the 'Got?' for all sorts of other things in the course of their promotion.



- As mentioned in the April 2012 issue of this newsletter, another new serpent maker is Serpents Ribo in Belgium. Pierre Ribo sent a message via Doug Yeo about his new model, a French serpent with 4 keys based on an anonymous original instrument from the early 1800s, the original instrument residing in the MIM (Musical Instrument Museum) in Brussels. It is available in black or natural leather, with lead pipe(s) to pitch at 392, 415, 430, 440.

All brass pieces for the Ribo serpents are made by Cedric Gilman. Serpents Ribo apparently does not have a webpage, although there is a Facebook page that includes only the same contact information listed in the newsletter's *Getting Serpents* section.

- Doug Yeo has been collecting old illustrations of military bandmen with serpents, and has sent a few for this newsletter. These appear on the next page. Each is identified with a caption.



Serpent by Ribo (see 'Getting Serpents' section)



*Koninklijk Holland ca. 1806~1810
Tamboers en muzikanten van het 9e Regiment Infanterie*



*Left-
Illustration marked
'Van Houter'*



*Right-
Duke of Gloucester's Band
1811*



*Above-
1804: Garde Impériale:
Régiments des Grenadiers à pied*

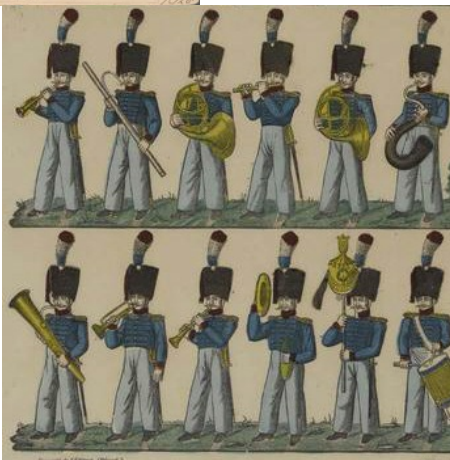
*Left-
1828 anonymous*



*Left-
Musicians and Soldier:
Catalonia Light Infantry
Regiment In Their New
Uniform
by Christoph & Cornelius
Suhr, ca. 1820s*



*Right-
Napoleon's Grand Armée
1812, by Carle Vernet*



*Musique d'Infanterie Francaise
Artist and/or publisher is 'Pellerin'*



*Bandmaster and Bandsmen 1851
Coldstream Regiment of Foot Guards*